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ABSTRACT

Corporate funding is now being used to invest in the improvement of community dependent care. This strategy benefits the firms by: (1) ensuring that employees will be absent from work less frequently due to childcare responsibilities; (2) providing a flexible strategy for meeting a variety of community needs; (3) improving community-firm relations; and (4) offering a highly visible way to make community investments. Funds operate on two models, the employee-sponsor model and the targeted approach. Each model has advantages and disadvantages. In the employee-sponsor model, employees recommend worthwhile community programs for funding and are encouraged to be active and educated in their communities' needs, but this model is very labor intensive. The targeted approach model involves assessing community needs and putting out a "Request for Proposals" to local organizations. The targeted model has a greater chance of meeting a real community need, but its top-down orientation leads to less employee involvement. Drawing on the experience of existing funding programs, the following recommendations are offered: (1) A successful funding program is part of an overall work-family strategy; (2) communication at all levels is critical; and (3) smaller sums of money can be effective, particularly in small or rural communities. (JW)

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